



# FORUM

Facts, Outcomes, & Research... Useful for Managing

## OFFENDER RE-ENTRY: AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

BY SHAWN KENNICUTT

The number of offenders re-entering the community has increased significantly over the last 20 years. The Bureau of Justice reports that 95 percent of all incarcerated state prisoners will be released from prison at some point and 80 percent of those will be released to some form of post release supervision (BJS, 2003). Nearly 600,000 people, 1,600 a day, were released from prison in 2002 (Petersilia, 2003). Over 8,000 offenders were released from Washington State prison facilities during Fiscal Year 2002, with that number promising to grow by more than 20 percent during Fiscal Year 2003. The number of offenders reentering society has never been larger than it is today.

While the number of offenders releasing is staggering, the social and medical problems associated with this population are just as serious. For example, more than three-quarters of the prisoners scheduled for release in the next year report a history of drug and/or alcohol abuse. At the same time the need for substance abuse treatment is growing; only 10 percent of offenders releasing today have participated in Chemical Dependency (CD) treatment programs, while 10 years ago 25 percent had participated in CD treatment (Petersilia, 2003). Additionally, the rising age of the offender population (28.2 in 1981 to 35.4 in 2003 in Washington State) has increased medical service costs for a population already predisposed to medical problems.

While the needs of offenders releasing from institutions are increasing, the resources to meet the needs have declined. Since the 1970's state prison populations have grown more than 500 percent making prison budgets the fastest growing state expenditure. The money allocated for corrections during this time period was focused on building more prisons, and as the populations increased, prison programs began to lose funding.

All of these issues have combined to make offender re-entry a focus of not only the National Institute of Justice, but of criminologists and researchers as well. Focusing on offender re-entry will force us as researchers to examine variables and predictors of recidivism not usually considered in the correctional literature. While we are able to count the number of offenders entering and exiting Washington State prisons each year, we have no idea of the effect of some very important factors including the effects of available neighborhood resources, intensive pre-release planning and other contextual factors, on success once released from prison.



## FOR YOUR INFORMATION..

### BOOK/PUBLICATION OF THE MONTH

Emerging Roles and Responsibilities in the Reentry Partnership Initiative: New Ways of Doing Business  
James M. Byrne, Ph.D., Faye S. Taxman, Ph.D.,  
Dougals Young, M.S.

This publication addresses the many aspects of reentry as it pertains to institutions, the community, community corrections, law enforcement, victims and offenders. Available for free on the website of the month or in the Planning and Research library.

### WEB SITE OF THE MONTH

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/reentry/welcome.html>

Visit the Office of Justice Programs website on Reentry.

### DEFINITION OF THE MONTH

Reentry:

1. A second or new entry, as a reentry into public life.
2. A resuming or retaking possession of what one has lately foregone.

### DOC MONTHLY STATISTICS AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2003

#### INMATE POPULATION .....

Prisons .....	15,007
Prerelease .....	430
Work Release .....	640
Out of State Rented Beds .....	236

#### COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS POPULATION

ACTIVE SUPERVISION .....	68,476
RMA .....	6,911
RMB .....	5,959
RMC .....	10,967
RMD .....	6,219
Monetary .....	34,053
Unclassified .....	4,097
INACTIVE STATUS .....	26,399

### ESCAPES FROM SECURITY LEVELS 2-5, FOR FY04

	Date	Type	Return
Stafford Creek	08/29/03	Facility	08/29/03
Ahtanum View	09/01/03	Facility	09/08/03

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P&R Homepage, under Data and Research on the DOCNET homepage

The Department of Corrections has begun implementing a re-entry process that may help provide some of the answers to the questions many researchers are asking. Correctional practitioners can expect re-entry issues to be a high priority for research given the amount of grant monies provided states to implement innovative re-entry programs. The effectiveness of these programs or elements of these programs may indeed drive correctional practice into the foreseeable future.